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ABSTRACT

A study investigated the role of audience awareness in translation of lexical items, specifically as it may affect translation from English to Chinese. The audiences, or readership, in this case is defined as readers from three different regions in which Chinese is used predominantly: Hong Kong; mainland China; and Taiwan. The varieties of Chinese used in these areas are first examined, and the implications for translators of non-standard vocabulary due to differing political, economic, and social structures are noted. Data drawn from three widely-read newspapers in the three regions are then analyzed for lexical variation. Analysis includes: lexical items used uniquely in Hong Kong, mainland China, or Taiwan; instances in which a single referent has three different lexical items in the three areas; instances in which two lexical items are used for the same referent in the three regions; lexical differences between Hong Kong and mainland China; lexical differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan; lexical differences due to different transliteration methods; convergence of lexical items; and lexical borrowing. The need for translators to check regional lexical usage in each translation instance is underscored. Contains 2 references. (MSE)

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The Importance of Readership in Teaching Translation: Observations on Lexical Variations in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan

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by

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Introduction

Students of translation are all too familiar with the principle that before they tackle any piece of translation work, they must first have a full understanding of the original text. Yet to be familiar with the principle is one thing. Whether they could effectively and fully put the principle into practice is another. In training students to integrate this principle with practice, there are several points which must be brought home to them. Not only do they have to analyze the semantic, syntactic and stylistic features of the text, but they also have to take into account the extra-linguistic factors. For instance, they have to consider the readership in order to determine the kind of syntactic structures and lexical items they should employ when they come to translate the text. With regard to this point of readership, Peter Newmark (1988:13) remarks that the translator has to characterise the readership of the original and then that of the translation, and may try to assess the level of education, the class, age and sex of the readership.

In view of the prominent role that readership plays when students of translation come to translate a text, this article endeavours to study how its importance has a bearing on one particular area, i.e. the use of lexical items. To be more specific, the main concern of this article is to examine the translation of an English lexical item into Chinese and how the translation varies when there is a change in the readership. The readership to be discussed here is confined to readers from three different regions in which

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Chinese is pre-dominantly used, namely, Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan, though there are also large Chinese communities in countries like Singapore, the United States and Canada and their use of Chinese will constitute interesting topics for discussion as well.

As a starting point, it is pertinent to draw the attention of students to the variety of Chinese used. Note what Li and Thompson (1981:1) have got to say about Putonghua as used in Mainland China and Guoyu as used in Taiwan. In Mainland China, Putonghua was officially established as the national language in 1955. It embodies the pronunciation of the Beijing dialect, the grammar of northern Mandarin, and the vocabulary of modern vernacular literature. In the early fifties, Guoyu was accepted as the national language of Taiwan. It is also based on the Beijing dialect. As both Putonghua and Guoyu are based on the Beijing dialect, they are quite similar. However, Li and Thompson point out in clear terms that they do differ in certain areas of vocabulary, and they are subject to the influence of numerous other dialects currently used. Hence, a truly uniform language can exist only in theory.

It is exactly this lack of one homogeneous entity of Chinese and the existence of non-standard vocabulary forms that students must be especially aware of. Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan each have its own political, social and economic structures. Differences inevitably arise from the barriers of these structures. The greater the barriers, the more distinct the differences. These naturally find expression in the lexical items the people use in their daily life. There are lexical items which are used in the limited geographical area of one region. This may owe to the fact that the things they refer to are purely local so lexical items must be developed to denote these. This may also owe to the fact that this region has a peculiar way of describing certain things which is different from elsewhere. As a result, lexical items which are used in one region do not necessarily have any counterparts in the other two regions. Conversely, there are cases in which the same thing could be found in all three regions, but it is referred to in the form of different lexical items. Such

regional differences of lexical items, which are the result of a complex of forces, must not be overlooked by students. It is indeed a requisite for them to identify the target readers of the translation. Then they could use their discretion to decide what lexical item to use so as to make the translation comprehensible to the readers.

To elucidate the view that there are certain lexical items which are uniquely used in one region and the translation of an English lexical item varies from region to region, this article will cite examples from different dimensions of political, social, economic and personal life. The examples are drawn from a corpus of bilingual materials collected for a research study on lexical variations in the three regions of Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan. The sources of these materials include widely-read newspapers, namely, China Daily, *Renmin Ribao* 人民日報 (People's Daily) published in China; China Post, *Zhongyang Ribao* 中央日報 (Central Daily News) published in Taiwan; and South China Morning Post and Mingbao 明報 published in Hong Kong.

Observations on lexical variations in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan

1 Lexical items uniquely used in Hong Kong

Below are examples of how certain lexical items are uniquely used in Hong Kong:

(a) Hong Kong is well known for its limited space and high density of population. People who are too poor to rent a room or not yet eligible for public housing have to rent a bedspace. For a 500-foot apartment with rows of bunked beds to accommodate two or three dozens of tenants is no surprising news to the people of Hong Kong. To keep their own belongings in safe custody, the tenants enclose their bedspaces with

wires, turning their homes into cages, hence these are known as 籠屋 *longwu* (cage house). This type of caged homes which hardly has any counterpart elsewhere is however an eyesore to the government.

(b) With the reversion of Hong Kong's sovereignty to China on 1 July 1997, people who sat on the Legislative Council under the British administration had to have their terms of office terminated in June 1997. There was no 'through train', originally referring to the train travelling non-stop between Hong Kong and Guangzhou of China, which could transport them to the new epoch. 直通車 *zhitong che* (through vehicle) thus takes on another meaning in the political arena of Hong Kong.

(c) In the manufacturing sector of Hong Kong, some people have taken advantage of the cheap labor in Mainland China and had their textile products manufactured there. But these are exported to the United States attached with the label of 'Made in Hong Kong'. Such products are described as 潛水貨 *qian shui huo* (go-under-water product), signifying their secretive nature.

(d) There is a kind of drink which is a typical produce of Hong Kong, which involves the mixing together of coffee and tea. The tea as used here is not just plain tea, but tea added with milk and sugar. Together with coffee, it forms 鴛鴦 *yuanyang*, a lexical item originally referring to a kind of bird often mentioned in classical Chinese literature and translated as 'mandarin duck', and metaphorically referring to a couple.

2 Lexical items uniquely used in Mainland China

For the purpose of illustrating that some lexical items are uniquely used in Mainland China, the following examples are quoted:

(a) With the implementation of the open economic policy of Mainland China in the 1970s, Special Economic Zones especially along the coastal regions have been designated as areas for having priority in developing trade and commerce and enjoying preferential treatment, in the attempt to lure foreign investment. This novel entity is referred to as 經濟特區 *jingji tequ* (economically-special zone) in Chinese. This distinct feature could not find a parallel in the economic structures of Hong Kong or Taiwan.

(b) About a decade ago, tourists who went to Mainland China used the foreign exchange certificates to buy things or pay for accommodation and meals, while the local people used Renminbi. There existed at the same time two kinds of currencies and this was rather unusual for a country. Eventually, the foreign exchange certificates was abolished, and only the Renminbi remains in use. These are some of the ways of how this situation is described in English: the two-tier exchange rates were merged; the unification of the foreign exchange rate; a single exchange rate is used. This is expressed in Chinese in the succinct term of 匯率并軌 *huilü bing gui* (exchange rates merge track).

(c) English readers may find the expression 'vegetable basket project' perplexing. The Chinese lexical item for it, 菜籃子工程 *cai lanzi gongcheng*, is equally perplexing to people of Hong Kong or Taiwan. An understanding of the economic policy of Mainland China is integral to the comprehension of this lexical item. The project mentioned is actually related to the supply of vegetables. Over the last few years, to safeguard the livelihood of people, Mainland China has adopted the policy that mayors should be responsible for ensuring the vegetable supply of a municipality, hence 實行'菜籃子'市長負責制 *shixing cai lanzi shizhang fuze zhi*.

(d) Along this same line, there is the expression of 'rice bag project' or 米袋

子工程 *mi daizi gongcheng* as known in Chinese. On this occasion, the project is related to the supply of rice. According to the directive of Mainland China, it is the responsibility of the provincial governors to ensure the grain supply of a province, hence 實行'米袋子'省長負責制 *shixing mi daizi shengzhang fuze zhi*. These two projects, inextricably tied to the economic background of Mainland China, could hardly find an equivalent in Hong Kong or Taiwan .

3 Lexical items uniquely used in Taiwan

The following examples are enumerated to throw light on how certain lexical items are uniquely used in Taiwan:

(a) The government of Taiwan greatly appreciates the contributions of military men to society. As a token of appreciation, it has built villages or special communities for retired military personnel and their families so that they need not worry about the problem of housing. Such communities which constitute an unique feature of the housing policy of Taiwan are known as 眷村 *juancun* (family village) or 國軍眷村 *guojun juancun* (national army's family village).

(b) People who are in need of money but could not obtain any loan from the bank may turn to underground financial institutions. In English, these institutions may also be referred to as underground lending houses or loan houses, or underground loan shark operations. Yet their Chinese version is one and the same: 地下錢莊 *dixia qianzhuang* (underground private bank). The lexical item 錢莊 *qianzhuang* is actually an archaic word redolent of private banks in the olden days. It does not make any appearance in the contemporary society of Hong Kong and Mainland China.

(c) Whenever the floor area of an office or an apartment is mentioned, the

lexical item 'ping' is inevitably used. This sounds strange to English readers. In fact, it is a transliteration of the Chinese word 坪 *ping*, which is a unit for measuring floor area in Taiwan. It equals 36 square feet or 3.34 square metres. However, even this Chinese word itself is unfamiliar to people in Hong Kong and Mainland China who are used to describing floor area in terms of feet or metres.

(d) For civil servants or laborers of a place to be covered by an insurance scheme introduced by the government is not anything unheard-of. In Taiwan, one more population group is also covered, i.e. farmers. Thus the abbreviated lexical items of 農保 *nongbao* (farmer insurance), 勞保 *laobao* (laborer insurance) and 公保 *gongbao* (public insurance) denoting insurance of civil servants are part and parcel of the life of the people in Taiwan.

4 Three different lexical items in three different regions

The following are instances whereby the referent remains constant whereas it is under different guises in the three different regions under discussion:

(a) Nowadays, concern for disabled people is placed high on the agenda of social welfare organisations. These people receive greater media attention and are no longer peripheral to society in all three regions. Nevertheless, how they are referred to in Chinese is entirely different. In Hong Kong, they are known as 傷殘人士 *shangcan renshi* (injured, disabled people); in Mainland China, they are 殘疾人 *canji ren* (disabled, diseased people); and in Taiwan, 殘障者 *canzhang zhe* (disabled, hindered people).

(b) As a mode of transport, motorcycle enjoys far greater popularity in Taiwan than Hong Kong and Mainland China. The streets of Taiwan are literally

deluged with nmotorcycles which are known as 機車 *jiche* (engine vehicle). They are, howwever, known as 電單車 *dian danche* (electric bicycle) in Hong Kong annd 摩托車 *motuo che* (motor vehicle) in Mainland China. It is interesting to note that *jiche*, as used in Mainland China, refers to 'railway enginne' and not 'motor cycle'.

(c) People in thee entertainment business are required to put on a show as their professicon. Of course, people in daily life could also put on a show if they wish too attract attention or produce certain dramatic effect. In Mainland Chirina, this action is plainly known as 表演 *biaoyan* (perform). But people inn Hong Kong and Taiwan prefer to transliterate the word 'show'. Consequently, the former use 做騷 *zuosao* (act show) and the latter use 作秀 *zuoxiu* (act show), resulting from the different transliterationn methods they use.

(d) Color televission is nowadays almost an indispensable household appliance in all three regions with the growing affluence of the people. This item findds expression in the lengthiest fashion in Hong Kong in four Chinese chaaracters 彩色電視 *caise dianshi* (color television). The method of abbbreviation is adopted in Mainland China and Taiwan, both using two Chiinese characters, i.e. 彩電 *caidian* (color tele[vision]) and 彩視 *caishi* (coblor [tele]vision) respectively.

5 Two differennt lexical items in three different regions

It is worthy oof attention that there are cases in which two of the regions use the same lexiical item for the same referent, whereas the third region uses a different one. Inn all likelihood, for two of the regions to share the same lexical item is a matterr of coincidence rather than a result of contrived design. Witness the followwing examples:

(a) 'Intellectual property rights' constitutes a subject of international interest at present and claims equal attention in the three regions. It knows no distinction in Chinese in Hong Kong and Mainland China in that it is known as 知識產權 *zhishi chanquan* (knowledge property right); while in Taiwan, it is known as 智慧財產權 *zhihui caichan quan* (wisdom property right).

(b) Mad cow disease was rampant in the United Kingdom a few years ago. Owing to its damaging nature, knowledge of it is propagated and brought home to the east to the people of the three regions. As this is a new disease hitherto unheard of, people have to coin new names for it. As a result, people in Hong Kong and Mainland China call it 瘋牛症 *fengniu zheng* (mad cow disease) alike but people in Taiwan opt to call it 狂牛病 *kuangniu bing* (wild cow illness).

(c) Traffic congestion occurs worldwide. It is by no means a strange sight in big modern cities in Mainland China, Taiwan or in Hong Kong. Yet this long-existing phenomenon is put into different words in Chinese. In Mainland China and Taiwan, it is 堵車 *du che* (blocked vehicles); in Hong Kong, it is 塞車 *sai che* (clogged vehicles).

(d) The underground railway is a relatively new mode of transport. It merits attention in that the English expressions of this mode of transport, as it exists in all three regions, are also different. Ever since the initial operation of the Mass Transit Railway in Hong Kong about two decades ago, it has been called 地鐵 *di tie*, an abbreviated form of 地下鐵路 *dixia tielu* (underground railway) in Chinese. The recently-constructed Metro Line of Shanghai 上海 shares the same Chinese expression. Whereas the Chinese expression for the underground railway in Taibei 台北 --- the Mass Rapid Transit System --- is 捷運系統 *jie yun xitong* (rapid transit system), with emphasis being laid on the high speed and efficiency of this

mode of transport.

6 Lexical differences between Hong Kong and Mainland China

Below is a catalogue of examples which bears testimony to how one referent finds different expressions in Hong Kong and Mainland China:

(a) 'Container docks' is an indispensable facility of modern shipping industry, as it could transport large bulk of goods. In Hong Kong, this is called 貨櫃碼頭 *huogui matou* (goods' cabinet dock) whereas in Mainland China, this is called 集装箱碼頭 *jizhuangxiang matou* (packed boxes dock).

(b) Policemen play a key part in maintaining the law and order of a place. Yet they are known differently in Hong Kong and Mainland China. The former calls them 警察 *jingcha* (policemen) while the latter calls them 公安 *gong'an* (public security).

(c) Originally a German word, 'Kindergarten' has gained wide currency in English language and crossed boundary to become an English word. This place where pre-school kids gather to learn to lead social life is known as 幼稚園 *youzhi yuan* (innocent garden) in Hong Kong, and 幼兒園 *youer yuan* (small kids garden) in Mainland China.

(d) To control population growth, both Hong Kong and Mainland China have done the utmost and enthusiastically promoted family planning work. The former advocates two-children families and the latter single-child families. Despite the fact that the same kind of work is undertaken, it is known as 家庭計劃工作 *jiating jihua gongzuo* (family planning work) in Hong Kong but 計劃生育工作 *jihuo shengyu gongzuo* (planned birth work) in Mainland China.

(e) Air pollution is a nightmare for residents of urban areas. This universal phenomenon is described in different manners in Hong Kong and Mainland China, and known as 空氣污染 *kongqi wuran* (air pollution) and 大氣污染 *daqi wuran* (atmosphere pollution) respectively.

(f) One of the concerns of employees is whether there will be any retirement pay when they retire from their post. People in Hong Kong refer to this as 退休金 *tuixiu jin* (retire money) but people in Mainland China use the lexical item 離退休金 *li tuixiu jin* (leave , retire money).

(g) Ginseng referring to 人參 *renshen* is a kind of herbal medicine of the east, the consumption of which , it is believed, could ensure longevity. Western ginseng, though it may not serve the same purpose, is said to do good to one's health. In Hong Kong, it is called 花旗參 *huaqi shen* (patterned flag ginseng). The words 花旗 *huaqi* actually mean 'American flag'. In Mainland China, this same thing is called 西洋參 *xiyang shen* (western ocean ginseng), with 西洋 *xiyang* meaning 'western countries'.

(h) Certain consumer products find expression in different terms, as evidenced in these examples. Camera films in Hong Kong is 菲林 *feilin* which is the transliteration of 'film'. In Mainland China it is 照相膠卷 *zhaoxiang jiaojuan* (photo taking plastic roll).

(i) Tape recorders, another consumer product, is expressed in terms of 錄音機 *luyin ji* (recording machine) and 收錄機 *shoulu ji* (receiving, recording machine) in Hong Kong and Mainland China respectively.

7 Lexical differences between Hong Kong and Taiwan

The following examples are cited to illuminate how different lexical items are used for the same referent in Hong Kong and Taiwan:

(a) It could be seen from television news that fist fights sometimes break out between members during the meetings of the National Assembly in Taiwan when there are heated debates. The people in Taiwan have their own way to describe these fights. The lexical item they use is 肢體衝突 *zhiti chongtu*. Literally translated, this means 'confrontation of the limbs and trunk'. This is an obvious departure from the usage in Hong Kong where 互相毆打 *huxiang ouda* (reciprocal beating) is used.

(b) Networking is a very important element in the business world in that it enables businessmen to establish connections in the hope that more businesses could be secured. So businessmen in Hong Kong consider it necessary to have good 人際關係 *renji guanxi* (human between-one-another relationship). Businessmen of Taiwan express this in terms of the lexical item 人脈關係 *renmai guanxi*, literally meaning 'human vein relationship'. This conjures up quite a vivid imagery when one calls to mind the numerous veins in a human body.

(c) Lunch box is often the mid-day meal of office workers and students. The food it contains may vary greatly. In Hong Kong, it is commonly referred to as 飯盒 *fan he*, literally meaning 'rice box', though what is inside is not always rice; it could be noodles or spaghetti. In Taiwan, it is however called 便當 *bian dang*, a lexical item meaning lunch box which is borrowed from the Japanese language possibly during the days when Taiwan was under Japanese occupation.

(d) Public housing is a means of solving the problem of housing shortage for the low income bracket of society. The government of Hong Kong is at present making every endeavour to build more public housing units. Public housing is known here as 公屋 *gong wu* (public house). Whereas in Taiwan, the similar type of public housing is called 國宅 *guo zhai* (nation

house).

(e) Anyone who has committed crime is liable to imprisonment. "Prisoners" is manifested in different lexical items in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The former calls them 監犯 *jianfan* (imprisoned criminal) emphasizing the fact that they are criminals who are imprisoned. While the latter calls them 受刑人 *shouxing ren* (penalized people) underlining the fact that they are people who are penalized.

(f) People who have committed an offence such as illegal parking is liable to a fine. The fine is referred to as 罰款 *fakuan* (penalty money)in Hong Kong, but 罰鍰 *fahuan* (penalty amount) in Taiwan.

(g) The public transport in any place could be suspended due to bad weather or mechanical faults. In Hong Kong, it will simply be described as 停駛 *ding shi* (stop driving). Nevertheless, in Taiwan, it will be described as 停擺 *ting bai* (stop swaying).

(h) To encourage residents to travel by bus especially during peak hours, some cities have designated bus-only lanes so that buses will not be caught in traffic congestion. In Hong Kong, the lexical item 'bus' has for long been transliterated and accepted as 巴士 *bashi*. It then follows that the bus-only lane is called 巴士專用線 *bashi zhuanyong xian* (bus-specially- used lane). In Taiwan, 'bus' is not transliterated, but translated as 公車 *gongche* (public vehicle) . It then follows that the bus-only lane is 公車專用道 *gongche zhuanyong dao* (public vehicle-specially-used road).

(i) Foreign exchange reserves plays a vital role in the economy of a place. In Hong Kong this is called 外匯儲備 *waihui chubei* (foreign exchange in store); in Taiwan, this is 外匯存底 *waihui cundi* (foreign exchange kept as basis).

8 Lexical differences due to different transliteration methods

The lexical items used in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Taiwan may also differ as a result of different transliteration methods, which is born out by these examples:

(a) In the medical field is this relatively new illness of aids, the acronym for 'acquired immune deficiency syndrome'. At the moment, it makes sporadic headlines in newspapers of the three regions. As it is a new addition to the medical dictionaries, a new Chinese name has to be coined. All three regions have chosen to transliterate the acronym. The approach adopted being the same, the names that are eventually used are still slightly different as a result of different transliteration methods. In Hong Kong and Taiwan, it is known as 愛滋病 *ai zi bing*; in Mainland China, it is 艾滋病 *ai zi bing*. Note that the same sound '*ai*' is represented by two different Chinese characters.

(b) Proper nouns are often transliterated. Parkinson's disease to which elderly people are vulnerable worldwide is known as 柏金遜症 *bai jin xun zheng* in Hong Kong but 巴金森氏症 *ba jin sen shi zheng* in Taiwan. The proper noun 'Parkinson' is transliterated in different manners. The Shengen Agreement which facilitates travel arrangement in European countries is known as 神根公約 *shen gen gongyue* in Hong Kong but 申根公約 *shen gen gongyue* in Taiwan. It could be discerned that the same sound '*shen*' is represented by two different Chinese characters. The Guinness Book of Records is referred to as 健力士紀錄大全 *jian li shi jilu daquan* in Hong Kong but 金氏紀錄 *jin shi jilu* in Taiwan. It is noticeable that the word 'Guinness' is transliterated as 健力士 *jian li shi* in Hong Kong, but the people in Taiwan just transliterate the first syllable of the word into 金 *jin* and add to it the word 氏 *shi* indicating that *jin* is the surname of a

person.

9 Convergence of lexical items

One of the salient features of language is that it is ever changing. A certain thing which finds expression in one lexical item may, with the passage of time, be expressed in another. By chance, this newly-used lexical item may also be in current use elsewhere, as illuminated by these examples:

(a) The mobile phone, a modern hi-tech gadget which facilitates communication, is different from the traditional phone in that it could be carried around by the user. Precisely because of this new 'mobile' feature, users in different regions have to refer to it in a new way. It is not at all surprising that at first no consensus is achieved. In Hong Kong, it is known as 手提電話 *shouti dianhua* (handcarried phone); in Mainland China, it is 移動電話 *yidong dianhua* (moving phone); and in Taiwan, it is 行動電話 *xingdong dianhua* (action phone). As it gets increasingly popular these days, people in Hong Kong and Mainland China have lately grown accustomed to referring to it in a more concise way ----- 手機 *shouji* (hand machine).

(b) Fireworks is almost an integral part of any Chinese festive occasion such as the celebration of the National Day or Chinese New Year. Although Chinese people in the three regions revel in this activity alike, they have described this activity in rather different manners. In Hong Kong, it is 煙花 *yanhua* (smoke flower); in Mainland China, it is 焰火 *yanhuo* (flame fire); in Taiwan, it could be either 煙火 *yanhuo* (smoke fire) or 燄火 *yanhuo* (flame fire). Nevertheless, it has been spotted that Mainland China has recently begun to use the lexical item of 煙花 *yanhua*, and Taiwan has started to use 焰火.

10 Borrowing of lexical items

Towards the 21st century, with the advanced development of the communications system, lexical items which are used in one region are quickly circulated to the other two regions via the electronic and broadcast media or the press. It is very likely that this will exert an influence in the other regions.

Such influences are tangible in Hong Kong. In early 1996, when Lee Teng-hui 李登輝 and Lien Chan 連戰 launched their election campaign in Taiwan and ran for the posts of President and Vice-president respectively, the English press of Taiwan described this as 'the partnership of Lee Teng-hui and Lien Chan'. In Chinese, this is spelt out in more precise terms 李連配 *li lian pei* (Lee Lien partnership). In mid-1996, as Tung Chee-hwa 董建華 was declared the first Chief Executive of the Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong and he subsequently announced that Anson Chan 陳方安生 would become the Chief Secretary for Administration of the Region, i.e. the head of the civil service, the Chinese press immediately termed their partnership 董陳配 *dong chen pei* (Tung Chan partnership). It can hardly be denied that the press in Hong Kong has not been 'inspired' by the use of the expression of *li lian pei* in Taiwan.

Moreover, in referring to the number of times that an activity takes place or the different phases of an activity, the people in Taiwan often use the lexical item 第幾波 *di ji bo*. So for an activity which takes place for the second time, or enters its second phase, this is 第二波 *di er bo*. This expression has made its debut in the writing proper of Hong Kong recently.

When the government of Mainland China introduces new measures, the expression 出台新的措施 *chutai xin de cuoshi* (come to appear on the stage new measures) is often employed, with the action of 'to introduce' conveyed in

the very vivid manner of 'come to appear on the stage'. This usage has been quickly picked up by the press of Hong Kong and begun to make appearance in the newspapers of Hong Kong.

It is commonplace for people in Mainland China, in criticizing others, to use the expression 無限上綱 *wuxian shang gang* (endlessly on main item list). This often involves the putting on a label on someone especially when something simple is exaggerated or even politicized. Nowadays, this lexical item has transcended boundary and come to Hong Kong. It could be detected that the press has started using it particularly in connection with news on politics.

Conclusion

It is true that some of the lexical items used in the various facets of life in the three regions under discussion are uniform. It is equally true that there are occasions on which the lexical item referring to the same thing may initially vary in two or all of these regions, but eventually become uniform. The recent adoption of the lexical item of *shouji* (hand machine) for mobile phone in both Hong Kong and Mainland China, apart from the respective lexical items of *shouti dianhua* (handcarried phone) and *yidong dianhua* (moving phone) used earlier, is a case in point.

However, translation students should not in view of this have the erroneous impression that lexical items used in these three regions are uniform. Discussions in previous sections provide ample evidences proving otherwise. In fact, if translation students fail to use the appropriate lexical item for a particular region, this will lead to a lack of understanding on the part of the readers of the translation. For instance, when the expression *jie yun xitong* (rapid transit system), widely circulated in Taiwan, is used either in Hong Kong or Mainland China, readers of both regions may be at a loss as to what this is, since for them, the same referent of underground railway is *di tie* or *dixia tielu*.

When *jizhuangxiang* (packed boxes), a lexical item in current use in Mainland China, is incorporated into a translated text for the readers of Hong Kong and Taiwan, they may not know that this is actually 'container', i.e. *huogui* (goods' cabinet).

Concomitantly, if translation students fail to use the appropriate lexical item for a particular region, this can also cause misunderstanding on the part of the readers of the translated text. For example, to the readers of Mainland China, the motorcycle is known as *motuo che* (motor vehicle). Suppose the corresponding lexical item used in Taiwan, *jiche* (engine vehicle), comes to draw their attention in a translated text, they will definitely think of something else, as *jiche* in Mainland China refers to 'railway engine'. The lexical item of *yuanyang* referring to a popular kind of mixed drink within the context of Hong Kong will be beyond the comprehension of the readers in Mainland China and Taiwan because the same lexical item means for them either a kind of bird or a couple.

All in all, one of the requisites of a translator is that they have to take note of the importance of readership. To make the translation comprehensible to readers, the lexical items, among other things, they customarily use must be employed. So in the training of translation students, the importance of readership cannot be over-emphasized. It must be underscored that they have to check in each and every case the exact Chinese lexical item prevalently used if their translation is going to be reader-oriented.

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